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BREEDING AND WINTERING AREAS OF RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS BANDED IN BARTON COUNTY, KANSAS

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A total of 120 Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) banded in Kansas has been recovered, the third largest number of recoveries from bandings in the Central Flyways, exceeded only by South Dakota and North Dakota. Most (76) of these resulted from bandings by Frank Robl of Ellinwood, Barton County, Kansas from 1937 to 1940. Two additional recoveries were of birds banded by Robl in 1965. Mr. Robl died in 1976 without publishing information on these recoveries. A 1988 print-out list two other banders in Barton County, E. F. Martinez and Marvin Schwilling. A total of 31 additional recoveries from birds banded in Barton County resulted from the bandings of Martinez (17) and Schwilling (13) in the 1970's. Two other redwing recoveries in 1933-34 resulted from bandings by Preston Osborn of Lakin, Kearney County, who banded in Barton County. Thus, 111 of the 120 Kansas recoveries (92.5%) resulted from Barton County birds. This number gives good insight into the breeding and wintering areas of birds passing through Barton County from August to November and from February to May.

Results and Discussion

The best migrational picture emerges from the 78 recoveries by Robl. His farm was on the south shore of the Cheyenne Swamp, now Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Management Area (Robl 1935). Mr. Robl was a pioneer duck bander, fashioning bands from pieces of tin as early as 1924 (Hintz 1974), thus most of his blackbirds were probably captured in baited duck traps. He appeared to band only from February to May and from August to November. The peak of migration of redwings in Barton County occurs in March and September (Table 1).

TABLE 1.
MONTH OF BANDING OF 78 RECOVERIES OF RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS.
BANDED BY FRANK ROBL AT ELLINWOOD, BARTON COUNTY, KANSAS.

Month	No.	Percent
February	2	6.3
March	18	56.3
April	11	34.4
May	1	3.1
Total (winter-spring)	32	
August	1	2.2
September	32	69.6
October	8	17.4
November	5	10.9
Total (summer-fall)	46	

Of the 78 redwing recoveries, Robl retrapped 31 himself. Since all but one of these occurred in a month other than the month of its initial capture (Table 2), many birds probably stay in Barton County for extended periods in both spring and fall. The other

TABLE 2.
MONTH OF BANDING AND RECOVERY OF 31 RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS.
RETRAPPED BY FRANK ROBL, ELLINWOOD, BARTON COUNTY, KANSAS.

Month Banded	Month Retrapped						
	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
March				1	1		1
April		1			2	1	
August				1			
September	2	6	6		1	3	
October	1	1	2				
November					1		
TOTAL	3	8	8	2	5	4	1

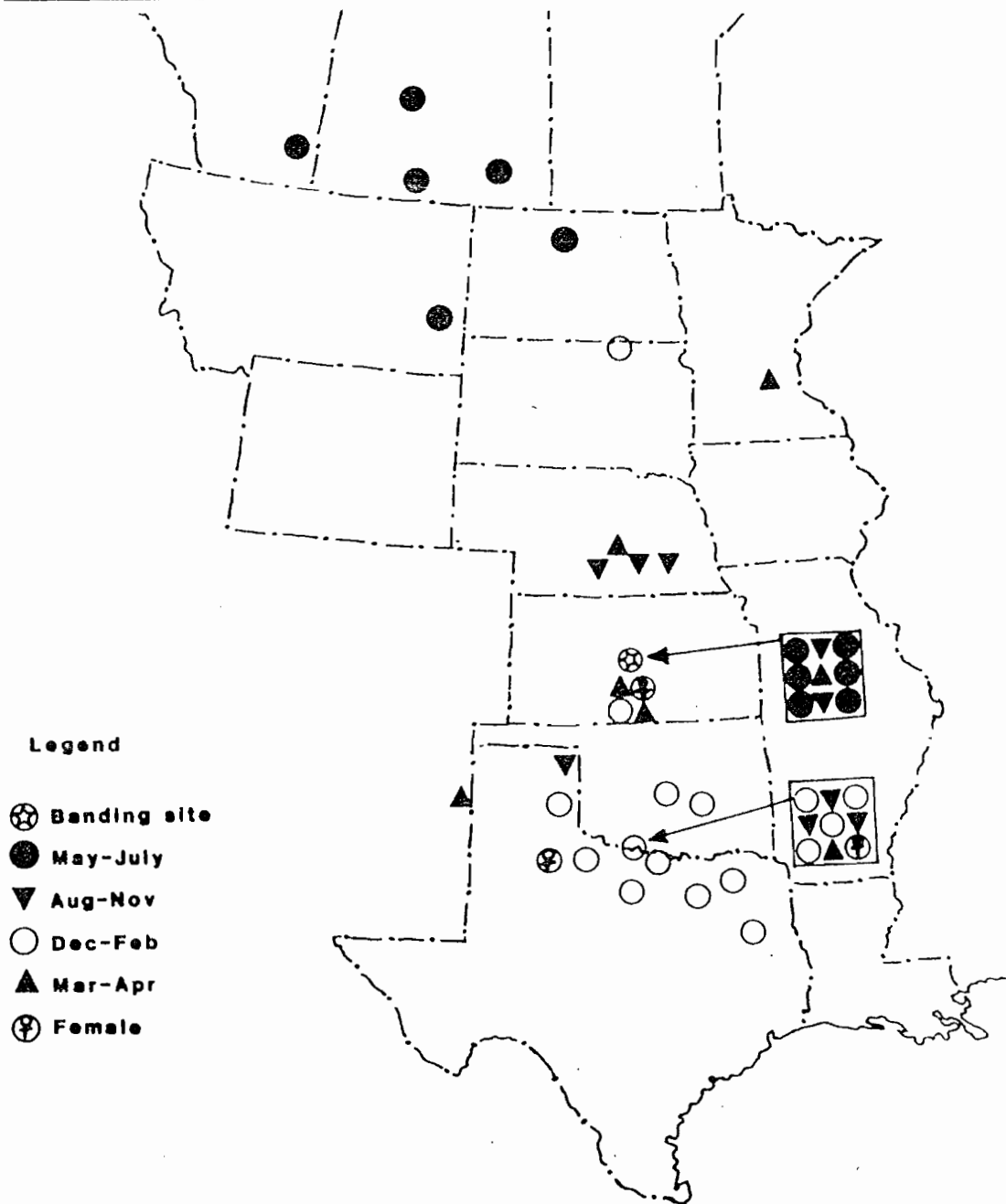


FIGURE 1. Recoveries of 47 red-wings banded by Frank Robl at Ellinwood, Barton County, Kansas, 1937-65.

TABLE 3
SEASONAL RECOVERIES BY THE PUBLIC OF 47 RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS
BANDED BY FRANK ROBL AT ELLINWOOD, BARTON COUNTY, KANSAS

Banded Date	Sex	Date	Recovered Location
Breeding Areas			
26 Sept. 37	?	2 May 38	Hudson, Stafford Co., KS
24 Sept. 40	?	4 May 44	Great Bend, Barton Co., KS
3 Mar. 40	?	18 May 44	Mile City, Custer Co., NE
10 Apr. 41	?	25 May 45	Greelman, Saskatchewan
29 Sept. 37	M	29 May 39	Russell, Russell Co., KS
2 Apr. 40	M	3 Jun. 40	Hudson, Stafford Co., KS
6 Mar. 40	?	5 Jun. 40	Strongfield, Saskatchewan
22 Oct. 36	M	6 Jun. 38	Russell, Russell Co., KS
6 Mar. 40	?	7 Jun. 40	Towner, McHenry Co., ND
20 Apr. 40	?	15 Jun. 40	Clafflin, Barton Co., KS
1 Apr. 41	?	15 Jun. 45	Flintoft, Saskatchewan
3 Mar. 40	?	13 Jun. 45	Medicine Hat, Alberta
2 Sept. 38	M	25 July 39	Dorrance, Russell Co., KS
Fall Migration			
2 Apr. 40	M	22 Sept. 44	Great Bend, Barton Co., KS
12 Sept. 39	M	8 Oct. 39	Hutchinson, Reno Co., KS
11 Apr. 37	M	? Oct. 41	Grand Island, Hall Co., NE
23 Sept. 37	M	10 Oct. 39	Wichita Falls, Wichita Co., TX
15 Nov. 37	M	10 Nov. 39	Overton, Dawson Co., NE
7 May 40	M	14 Nov. 40	Wichita Falls, Wichita Co., TX
23 Sept. 40	M	21 Nov. 41	Wichita Falls, Wichita Co., TX
2 Sept. 38	F	29 Nov. 38	Vernon, Wilbarger Co., TX
13 Oct. 37	M	30 Nov. 37	Canadian, Hemphill Co., TX
12 Mar. 40	?	? Nov. 41	Thayer, York Co., NE
Winter Areas			
20 Apr. 42	M	5 Dec. 45	Wichita Falls, Wichita Co., TX
18 Apr. 40	F	21 Dec. 40	McAdoo, Grosley Co., TX
25 Mar. 41	?	25 Dec. 42	Britton, Marshall Co., SD
1 Nov. 40	?	25 Dec. 42	Mineral Wells, Palo Pinto Co., TX
20 Feb. 65	M	27 Dec. 67	Troup, Cherokee Co., TX
18 Sept. 38	M	29 Dec. 39	Dallas, Dallas Co., TX
12 Mar. 40	?	3 Jan. 41	Vernon, Wilbarger Co., TX
20 Mar. 37	M	11 Jan. 38	Rhea, Dewey Co., OK
16 Sept. 39	M	12 Jan. 45	Wichita Falls, Wichita Co., TX
23 Sept. 37	M	15 Jan. 42	Crowell, Foard Co., TX
27 Mar. 37	M	31 Jan. 40	Dozier, Collingsworth Co., TX
8 Nov. 37	M	9 Feb. 38	Wewoka, Seminole Co., OK
18 Mar. 40	M	10 Feb. 41	Pratt, Pratt Co., KS
20 Feb. 65	M	13 Feb. 68	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Co., OK
14 Sept. 40	M	13 Feb. 46	Deport, Lamar Co., TX
1 Nov. 40	M	23 Feb. 41	Nacona, Montague Co., TX
Spring Migration			
6 Mar. 40	M	1 Mar. 44	Conchas Dam, San Miguel Co., NM
27 Mar. 41	?	1 Mar. 43	Stafford, Stafford Co., KS
26 Oct. 40	?	4 Mar. 48	Wichita Falls, Wichita Co., TX
2 Oct. 37	M	9 Mar. 40	Harper, Harper Co., KS
22 Mar. 37	M	26 Mar. 38	Watertown, Carver Co., MN
9 Mar. 40	M	26 Mar. 44	Amelia, Holt Co., NE
4 Mar. 40	?	3 Apr. 40	Great Bend, Barton Co., KS
20 Sept. 39	F	18 Apr. 40	Stafford, Stafford Co., KS

47 recoveries (31 males, 3 females, and 13 of unrecorded sex) were made by the public (Figure 1). This preponderance of males is also reflected in a 24:1 ratio in favor of males for the birds that Robl retrapped (Table 3).

Thirteen breeding season recoveries (2 May to 25 July) disclosed two breeding centers for Robl's birds, southern Saskatchewan and Barton County, Kansas (Figure 1). There were 6 recoveries of northern breeders and 7 of Barton County breeders (Table 3).

Fifteen winter season (5 December to 23 February) recoveries indicated that the center of the wintering area was near Wichita Falls, Texas on the Wichita and Red Rivers. Six winter recoveries were within 80 km of Wichita Falls and four other redwings were recovered in this area in late November and one in early March. Roosts of more than 1 million redwings have been regularly reported at Lake Wichita within the city limits of Wichita Falls (1962, 1963, 1968, 1970; unpublished data), and it is with these roosts that the Barton County birds are associated.

Central Kansas and to a lesser extent, central Nebraska, appear to be the chief fall and spring stopover sites for this population during migration (Table 3, Figure 1).

The four recoveries of redwings banded by Martinez in the 70's were near Kindersley, Saskatchewan and Amelia, Holt County, Nebraska in May, near Sharon, Barber County, Kansas in July, and near Chickasha, Grady County, Oklahoma in December. These are in the corridor formed by Robl-banded recoveries in the 30's and 40's, indicating little change in seasonal patterns in the past three decades.

The age of the 47 birds recovered by the public from Robl's banding is noteworthy. The mean date of recovery after banding was 2.3 years, suggestive of a high annual survival rate for this population. Since the population is not increasing rapidly, this level of adult longevity may indicate low survival of young.

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